

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6681

As of January 31, 2000

Title: An act relating to rural county planning goals under the growth management act.

Brief Description: Authorizing rural counties to use alternative methods to achieve planning goals.

Sponsors: Senators T. Sheldon and Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/2/2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: The comprehensive plan of a county or city that is required or chooses to plan under the Growth Management Act must consist of a map or maps, and descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the comprehensive plan. The plan must be an internally consistent document and all elements must be consistent with the future land use map. Each comprehensive plan must be adopted and amended with public participation and each comprehensive plan must include a plan, scheme or design for each of the following: (1) a land use element; (2) a housing element; (3) a capital facilities plan element; (4) a utilities element; and (5) counties must adopt a rural element. Thirteen goals are specified to guide the development and adoption of the comprehensive plan and development regulations. The burden is on the petitioner to a growth management hearings board to demonstrate that any action taken under the Growth Management Act is not in compliance with the act. The board must find compliance unless it determines that an act by a city, county or state agency is clearly erroneous in view of the entire record before the board.

Summary of Bill: A rural county, defined as a county with a population density of less than 100 persons per square mile, after conferring with its cities, may develop alternative methods of achieving the planning goals established by the Growth Management Act. This authority may not be used to modify requirements for the designation and protection of critical areas or natural resource lands or the requirements to establish a process for the siting of essential public facilities.

In any petition concerning whether or not a rural county's methods of achieving planning goals are in compliance with the Growth Management Act, the Growth Management Hearings Board must give great weight to decisions made by the rural county with regard to developing alternative methods of achieving planning goals and the board must find that such alternative methods are in compliance with this chapter unless it finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the alternative methods will not achieve the planning goals established by the act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.